

Children and Young People Board – End of Year Board Report

Purpose

For information and discussion.

Summary

This report provides an overview of the issues and work the Board has overseen during last year. It sets out key achievements in relation to the priorities for the CYP Board in 2016/2017.

Recommendation

Members are invited to note the achievements against the Board's priorities in 2016/17.

Action

Officers to action as appropriate.

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Education and schools

1. Although the Government announced in May 2016 that it would no longer legislate to force all council maintained schools to become academies, it remained committed to end the statutory council role in school improvement and to cut the Education Services Grant paid to councils by £600 million. The LGA continued lobby against these proposals and highlighted the excellent track record of councils in school improvement.
2. In October 2016 the new Secretary of State Justine Greening announced that the Government would not proceed with an Education Bill and would pay councils an annual £50 million grant in recognition of their continuing role in school oversight and improvement. Councils and council-maintained schools would also be able to bid into a £140 million per annum Strategic School Improvement Fund to support struggling schools. Previously it was the Government's intention that only academies and academy chains would qualify for school improvement funding.
3. In January the Board's Office Holders wrote to Justine Greening calling for a 'reset' of relationships between councils and the Department for Education, giving councils a clear strategic role in education, with the powers and funding necessary to effectively perform the role. Detailed discussions with civil servants to take forward the reset were paused during the General Election, but will now resume with the aim of producing non-statutory guidance which sets out the role of councils and other partners such as Regional Schools Commissioners in driving school improvement.
4. The LGA response to the second stage consultation on the introduction of a fairer national schools funding formula emphasised the need to retain some local flexibility in the application of the new formula. We highlighted the cost pressures in the High Needs Block which supports pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and called for adequate funding. The Government's response to the consultation, delayed by the election, is expected before the summer recess.

Early Years

5. The LGA hosted a conference, in partnership with Public Health England and the Association of Directors of Children's Services, for councillors and practitioners to consider how to achieve the best outcomes for children in their early years. Discussion topics included the introduction of 30 hours free childcare, the future of children's centre services, and the impact of housing and homelessness on children.

Children's Social Care

6. The LGA lobbied extensively around the Children and Social Work Bill as it went through Parliament. We welcomed the legislation's strong focus on support for children in care, including the corporate parenting role, though we highlighted the need for adequate new burdens funding for new and extended provisions. We were also pleased that the

Government accepted our call for sex and relationships education to be compulsory in all schools, including academies.

7. While we welcomed moves to allow more local flexibility in local children's safeguarding arrangements, we continue to be concerned around the involvement of some non-statutory partners, and continue to work with the Department for Education on guidance to ensure appropriate working with key partners such as schools. We raised concerns about direct ministerial control of the proposed new social work regulator and were pleased the Government redrafted the Bill to give Social Work England greater statutory independence.
8. The Bill initially contained provisions allowing the Secretary of State to relax or amend children's social care legislation in a local authority in intervention, without proper local consultation or consent. We worked with parliamentarians to persuade the Government to remove this power, though the proposal was eventually withdrawn in its entirety by the Government.
9. We have been active participants in the Department for Education's early engagement with the sector on its Fostering Stocktake, helping to shape the key lines of enquiry and to ensure local government's concerns and strengths are adequately represented. We also secured a commitment from the largest fostering company in the UK to end the practice of offering financial incentives to entice foster carers away from local authorities.
10. The LGA was part of the winning bid to run the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, working with Barnardo's and other partners to bring about system-wide change in how child sexual abuse is responded to locally and nationally through the use of evidence-based policy and practice. The LGA has also continued to work with Barnardo's on the National FGM Centre, which aims to end new cases of FGM within 15 years by building effective strategies for the identification and support of at-risk girls and changing community attitudes.

Children's Health

11. We produced a number of publications focussing on the health of children and young people. In December, the [Healthy futures: supporting and promoting the health needs of looked after children](#) publication highlighted that health (especially mental health) outcomes for looked after children are significantly worse than for the child population as a whole. The case studies highlighted both the council's public health responsibilities but also their corporate parenting role in supporting vulnerable children and the need for closer working between children's services, schools and public health colleagues.
12. [Working to support positive parenting and relationships. What can councils do?](#) recognised a renewed council focus on initiatives to support parents, given the body of evidence which shows that the quality of parent-child relationships particularly in the early years, is a key influencer on the social determinants of health throughout the life course.
13. In October 2016, Public Health England undertook a review of the five mandated health visitor checks delivered by health visitors between birth and two and a half years to

provide advice to the government on whether the mandate should continue following regulations expiring in March 2017. In anticipation of future changes to public health funding, the LGA (with other local sector partners including SOLACE, ADPH and ADCS) argued that mandate should be considered alongside the work on business rates retention and the public health grant.

14. In March 2017 the government confirmed that the five mandated health visitor checks would continue. [The LGA publication *Improving outcomes for children and families in the early years: a key role for health visiting services*](#) demonstrated through a series of local council case studies how councils have used the transfer of commissioning responsibilities for the 0-5 Healthy Child Programme, as an opportunity to translate PHE's six early years high impact areas into local context, focussing commissioning on the particular health issues that are most relevant for the 0-5 population in their local communities.
15. In February 2017 lead members of the Community Wellbeing Board and Children and Young People Board hosted a special meeting on children and young people mental health and wellbeing, inviting a range of different stakeholder representatives to form a rounded understand of the issues and determine future work priorities. The need for greater local accountability on spend and quality of services and building the capacity and capability of the providers in the system emerged as two key themes which will be taken forward over the coming months.

LGA Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group

16. The LGA Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group reports to both the Community Wellbeing and Children and Young People Board. Chaired by Cllr David Simmonds, the Task Group and cross-Board lead LGA members have been involved in the development of a range of national schemes that support refugees and asylum seekers, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The LGA contributed directly to the response to the Calais camp clearance and the development of a national transfer scheme for unaccompanied children, including securing a significant uplift in funding rates for local authorities.
17. Working with local authorities, regional bodies and national partners, we are continuing to flag key issues including the need for additional resources, greater alignment across programmes and more transparent and real time data. This has included a meeting and an event with the Immigration Minister in November and February respectively, and resources and information to support councils as outlined on the LGA website.